

# ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

## STEREOTYPE THREAT

Stereotype threat is a social identity threat that causes individuals to fear they will be judged or treated negatively based on social group stereotypes—such as those related to race, gender and ethnicity. Research has explored how stereotype threat can increase anxiety and psychological stress and decrease cognitive capacity. This annotated bibliography was compiled to supplement training materials on police trauma and implicit racial bias in the juvenile and criminal legal systems. The studies summarized below focus first, on the fear Black people have of being stereotyped as criminal; second, on the frequent misinterpretation of stereotype threat responses as indicators of deception or consciousness of guilt; and third, on the impact of stereotype threat on the mental health and behaviors of those who believe they are being stereotyped.

**These articles are cited in reverse chronological order. Please find the most recent articles at the beginning of each section.**

### **I. Stereotype Threat and Police Interactions**

Kimberly Barsamian Kahn, Jean M. McMahon and Greg Stewart, *Misinterpreting Danger? Stereotype Threat, Pre-attack Indicators, and Police-Citizen Interactions*, 33 J. Police & Crim. Psych. 45–54 (2018).

Kimberly Barsamian Kahn et al., *The Effects of Perceived Phenotypic Racial Stereotypicality and Social Identity Threat on Racial Minorities' Attitudes About Police*, 157 J. of Soc. Psych. 4, 416-428 (2017).

Cynthia Najdowski, Bette Bottoms and Phillip Atiba Goff, *Stereotype Threat and Racial Differences in Citizens' Experiences of Police Encounters*, 39:5 J. Law & Hum. Beha. 463-477 (2015).

### **II. Stereotype Threat, Interrogations, and False Confessions**

Deborah Davis and J. Guillermo Villalobos, *Interrogation and the Minority Suspect: Pathways to True and False Confession*, *Advances in Psychology and Law* VOL. 1, New York: Springer, (2016).

Deborah Davis and Richard Leo, *Interrogation-Related Regulatory Decline: Ego Depletion, Failures of Self-Regulation, and the Decision to Confess*, 18 J. Psycho., Pub. Policy, and Law, 673–704 (2012).

Cynthia Najdowski, *Stereotype Threat in Criminal Interrogations: Why Innocent Black Suspects are at Risk for Confessing Falsely*, 17 J. Psycho., Pub. Policy, and Law, 562–591(2011).

### III. Stereotype Threat and General Effects on Behavior

Toni, Schmader, Michael Johns and Chad Forbes, *An Integrated Process Model of Stereotype Threat Effects on Performance*, 115 Psychol. Rev. 336–356 (2008).

Brenda Major and Laurie T. O'Brien, *The Social Psychology of Stigma*, 56 Annual Rev. of Psychol. 393–421 (2005).

Jennifer Bosson, Ethan Haymovitz and Elizabeth Pinel, *When Saying And Doing Diverge: The Effects Of Stereotype Threat On Self-Reported Versus Non-Verbal Anxiety*, 40 J. Exp. Soc. Psychol. 247–255 (2004).

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#### I. STEREOTYPE THREAT AND POLICE INTERACTIONS

Kimberly Barsamian Kahn, Jean M. McMahon and Greg Stewart, *Misinterpreting Danger? Stereotype Threat, Pre-attack Indicators, and Police-Citizen Interactions*, 33 J. Police & Crim. Psych. 45–54 (2018).

##### Purpose

- This study compares stereotype threat responses with police trainings and materials on pre-attack indicators in police-citizen interactions.
- It hypothesizes that stereotype threat symptoms might be similar to the pre-attack indicators used in police trainings, which can cause police to misinterpret civilian actions. The authors argue that stereotype threat should be taught in police trainings.

##### Methodology

- The study reviews a sample of pre-attack-indicator police trainings to find three indicators of stereotype threat: *anxiety*, *arousal*, and *reduced cognitive capacity*.

##### Results

- There is a significant overlap between danger indicators taught in police trainings and stereotype threat responses. All 15 trainings reviewed contained at least one of the three responses of stereotype threat, and 13 contained at least two responses. None of the police trainings discussed stereotype threat.
  - Stereotype threat responses associated with *arousal* include rapid, shallow breathing, clenched fists, rigid posture, trembling in extremities, scanning the scene, gaze aversion, rolling the shoulders, and sweating.
  - Stereotype threat responses associated with *anxiety* include fidgeting, pacing, a high vocal pitch, increased blinking, clenched jaw, rocking on feet, shifting weight, touching the face or neck, removing clothing, and scratching.

- Stereotype threat responses associated with *reduced cognitive capacity* include changes in the cadence of dialogue, hesitant/short/slow responses, averting the eyes, repetitive responses, gaze aversion, and staring.
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**Kimberly Barsamian Kahn et al., *The Effects of Perceived Phenotypic Racial Stereotypicality and Social Identity Threat on Racial Minorities' Attitudes About Police*, 157 J. of Soc. Psych. 4, 416-428 (2017).**

### **Purpose**

- To examine the role of perceived phenotypic racial stereotypicality (meaning a person's own perception of how closely the person resembles a typical member of their racial/ethnic group) and race-based social identity threat (i.e. stereotype threat) on people's trust and cooperation with police.

### **Methodology**

- Participants included 168 people of racial minority groups, including Black, Latino, Native American, and multiracial people.
- Participants responded to a survey using a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).
- They were asked to rate their own "phenotypic racial stereotypicality" by responding the sentence: "Other people think I physically look like a typical member of my racial/ethnic group." They were then asked to respond to statements about their level of concern that their racial/ethnic identity would impact treatment from the police (e.g. "I worry that Portland Police may stereotype me because of my race or ethnicity," and "Portland Police treat people like me disrespectfully."). They were also asked about their trust in police and their likelihood of cooperating with the police.

### **Results**

- Black, Latino, Native American, and multiracial participants all experienced social identity threat, fearing they would be stereotyped and targeted by police based on their race.
  - The more racial minorities believed they resembled a typical member of their racial/ethnic group, the more they indicated concern about being treated negatively by police based on their racial group membership.
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**Cynthia Najdowski, Bette Bottoms and Phillip Atiba Goff, *Stereotype Threat and Racial Differences in Citizens' Experiences of Police Encounters*, 39:5 J. Law & Hum. Beha. 463-477 (2015).**

### **Purpose**

- This series of studies investigates how cultural stereotypes that depict Black people as criminals affect the way Blacks experience police encounters and presumes that police encounters cause Black people to feel stereotype threat (i.e., concern about being judged and treated unfairly by police because of the stereotype). By demonstrating that Black people are more likely to expect to be judged and treated unfairly by police because of the

negative stereotype of Black criminality, this research extends stereotype threat theory to criminal justice encounters. It also has practical implications for understanding how stereotype threat responses could ironically contribute to bias-based policing and racial disparities in the justice system.

## **Study 1**

### **Methodology**

- Participants were 49 Black (37% men) and 184 White (52% men) undergraduate psychology students from the University of Illinois at Chicago. The average age was 19 years old.
- Black and White participants were asked to self-report how they feel when interacting with police officers in general.

### **Results**

- Black students were significantly more likely than White students to report concern that police officers stereotype them as criminals simply because of their race.
- In addition, this impression was found for Black men but not Black women.

## **Study 2**

### **Methodology**

- Participants were 79 Black and 100 White men from two samples: (a) undergraduate psychology students from the University of Illinois at Chicago and (b) from contexts where students were likely to be (e.g., on campus)
- Black and White men were asked to imagine a specific police encounter in which it is clear that the officer is in close proximity to and sees the participant, and then asked to visualize how they would feel if they were in that situation.

### **Results**

- Blacks, but not White men anticipated feeling stereotype threat in the hypothetical police encounter.
- The study demonstrated that the racial difference in stereotype threat appears even when all participants envision the same kind of police encounter in terms of how likely it would have been for the police officer to confront them or target them as suspects.
- Racial differences in anticipated threat translated into racial differences in anticipated anxiety, self-regulatory efforts, and behavior that is commonly perceived as suspicious by police officers.

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## **II. STEREOTYPE THREAT, INTERROGATIONS, AND FALSE CONFESSIONS**

**Deborah Davis and J. Guillermo Villalobos, *Interrogation and the Minority Suspect: Pathways to True and False Confession*, Advances in Psychology and Law VOL. 1, New York: Springer, (2016).**

- This book chapter considers six sources of vulnerability to interrogation-induced confession among racial minorities, stereotype threat being one of them, and considers the mechanisms through which these sources affect the interrogator's presumption of guilt, interrogation effort, and selection of tactics.
- Stereotype threat suggests that when negative stereotypes about one's social group are made salient, the person may become concerned about being judged according to the stereotypes and/or about confirming the negative stereotype.
  - **Stereotype threat and the appearance of deception.** The experience of stereotype threat may lead the suspect to appear more deceptive, both in interrogation and later before judges and juries. Central to the experience of stereotype threat are increased anxiety, attempts to conceal that nervousness or anxiety, and efforts to disprove the stereotype.
  - **Stereotype threat and self-regulatory decline.** "Interrogation-related regulatory decline" (IRRD) refers to the self-regulatory decline during interrogation which reduces one's ability to control their emotions, thoughts, and behaviors. In interrogation, it is important to control emotions, both to minimize distress and to control cognition and behavior. Suspects often confess because they have become sufficiently distressed to do anything to escape the distressing context.
  - **Stereotype threat and hopelessness.** A central determinant of the decision to confess is the suspect's perceptions of the strength of evidence against him. Awareness of stereotypes associating race with criminality can instill hopelessness in minority suspects, undermining confidence that their claims of innocence will be believed.
- The authors conclude that minorities suffer enhanced vulnerability to true and false confessions and that minorities' vulnerabilities are unlikely to be recognized. Instead, stereotypes associating race with criminality tend to lead minority confessions to be viewed as more voluntary and true.

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**Deborah Davis and Richard Leo, *Interrogation-Related Regulatory Decline: Ego Depletion, Failures of Self-Regulation, and the Decision to Confess*, 18 J. Psycho., Pub. Policy, and Law, 673–704 (2012).**

- This article reviews the concept of "interrogation-related regulatory decline" (IRRD)—i.e., the decline in the self-regulation abilities necessary to resist the forces of influence inherent to interrogation.
- The research hopes to (1) encourage more evidence-based objectivity, realism, clarity and specificity in the criteria for assessing voluntariness of an interrogation and its admissibility in trial, (2) promote reforms aimed at preventing interrogation practices that create substantial risk of severe interrogation-related regulatory decline, and (3) encourage more scholarly research on acute sources of interrogative suggestibility.
- It explains that stereotype threat plays a role in the interrogation room by impairing performance, due to the depletion of cognitive resources resulting from (a) physiological stress responses, (b) trying to control stereotype-threat related behavior, and (c) attempting to regulate the negative emotions raised by stereotype-threat.

- Hyper-vigilance and self-regulatory efforts deplete cognitive capacities in ways that compromise the threatened individual's ability to resist pressure to confess in interrogations.

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**Cynthia Najdowski, *Stereotype Threat in Criminal Interrogations: Why Innocent Black Suspects are at Risk for Confessing Falsely*, 17 J. Psycho., Pub. Policy, and Law, 562–591 (2011).**

- This article notes the little theoretical effort to understand why a suspect's race might influence their decision to confess to a crime not committed and posits why Black people are overrepresented in samples of false confessions compared to White people.
  - The author argues that innocent Black suspects experience stereotype threat in interrogations and that this threat causes Black suspects to experience more arousal, self-regulatory efforts, and cognitive load compared to White suspects.
  - These psychological mechanisms could lead innocent Black suspects to display more nonverbal behaviors perceived as deception and, ironically, increase the likelihood that police investigators perceive them as guilty.
  - In response, investigators might engage in more coercive tactics and exert more pressure to confess on Black suspects than White suspects. This could increase the suspect's desire to escape interrogation and the likelihood of doing so by confessing falsely. This effect would be more common among Blacks than Whites.
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### **III. STEREOTYPE THREAT AND GENERAL EFFECTS ON BEHAVIOR**

**Toni, Schmader, Michael Johns and Chad Forbes, *An Integrated Process Model of Stereotype Threat Effects on Performance*, 115 Psychol. Rev. 336–356 (2008).**

- The authors examine stereotype threat in the context of research on stress arousal, vigilance, working memory, and self-regulation to develop a process model of how negative stereotypes impair cognitive and social performance.
  - The authors argue that stereotype threat disrupts performance via 3 distinct, yet interrelated, mechanisms: (a) a physiological stress response that directly impairs prefrontal processing, (b) a tendency to actively monitor performance, and (c) efforts to suppress negative thoughts and emotions in the service of self-regulation. These mechanisms combine to consume executive resources needed to perform well on cognitive and social tasks.
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**Brenda Major and Laurie T. O'Brien, *The Social Psychology of Stigma*, 56 Annual Rev. of Psychol. 393–421 (2005).**

- This article addresses the psychological effects of social stigma and reviews and organizes recent theory and empirical research within an identity threat model of stigma.

- There are four ways stigma affects the stigmatized: (a) negative treatment and direct discrimination, (b) expectancy confirmation processes, (c) automatic stereotype activation, and (d) identity threat processes.
  - Negative treatment and direct discrimination: By limiting access to important life domains, discrimination directly affects the social status, psychological well-being, and physical health of the stigmatized. Members of stigmatized groups are discriminated against in the housing market, workplace, educational settings, health care, and the criminal justice system.
  - Expectancy confirmation processes: Stigma also affects the stigmatized via expectancy confirmation processes, or self-fulfilling prophecies. Perceivers' negative stereotypes and expectations can lead them to behave toward others in ways that directly affect that targets' thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. The targets' behavior may then confirm the initial, erroneous expectation and even lead to expectancy-consistent changes in the targets' self-perceptions.
  - Automatic stereotype activation: Because of associations made by the mind between stereotypes and the behaviors they imply, thinking about a stereotype can automatically lead to behavior that assimilates to the stereotype. Activating cultural stereotypes of stigmatized groups can produce stereotype-consistent behavior even among people who are not members of the group, as long as they are aware of the stereotype. Activating stereotypes of the stigmatized, however, is more likely to result in stereotype-consistent behavior among the stigmatized than the non-stigmatized.
  - Identity threat processes: Contemporary perspectives on stigma emphasize the extent to which stigma's effects are reduced through targets' understanding of how others view them, their interpretations of social contexts, and their motives and goals.
  - This perspective assumes that stigma puts a person at risk of experiencing threats to his or her social identity.
- Identity threat occurs when stigma-relevant stressors are assessed as potentially harmful to one's social identity and as exceeding one's coping resources. Identity threat creates involuntary stress responses and attempts threat reduction through coping strategies.
- Stress responses and coping efforts affect important outcomes such as self-esteem, academic achievement, and health.
- Identity threat perspectives help to explain the tremendous variability across people, groups, and situations in responses to stigma.

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**Jennifer Bosson, Ethan Haymovitz and Elizabeth Pinel, *When Saying And Doing Diverge: The Effects Of Stereotype Threat On Self-Reported Versus Non-Verbal Anxiety*, 40 J. Exp. Soc. Psychol. 247–255 (2004).**

### **Purpose**

- This research proposes that researchers fail to obtain evidence of the anxiety triggered by stereotype threat because they search for this evidence in self-reports, rather than in other, less controllable types of responses.

### **Methodology**



- This study, instead, explores whether non- verbal measures would fare better than self-reports in capturing stereotype threat anxiety.
- The study involved 37 heterosexual and 28 gay men, aged 18–22 years at a small liberal arts college, who were asked to interact with preschool children under stereotype threat or control conditions.

## **Results**

- Stereotype-threatened gay men demonstrated more non-verbal anxiety, but not more self-reported anxiety, than non-threatened gays during these interactions.
  - Some of the non-verbal anxiety behaviors included fidgeting, chewing on lip, playing with hair, biting nails, nervous smiling, stiff posture, and averting eyes, among others.
- Non- verbal anxiety appeared to mediate the effects of stereotype threat on the quality of participants childcare skills.